A Peep into One of the Queer Haunt Gamblers in an Inner

"Did you ever see Chinamen gambles Come with me, and I'll show you. They are the most inveterate gamblers in the world. A Canton Chinaman would sell his cus to raise a stake to gamble with."

Expressing a desire to see this exhibition of Oriental depravity, my cleerone, who seemed to be well acquainted with the queer haunts of the city, taking a car to one of the down town wards, on a side street not more than a mile from the contral station, stopped before the front door of a house, in the windows of which hung the tawdry red curtains betokening a Chinese laundry.

"Chin-Chin," said he, as we entered the interior, to an almond-eyed Celestial engaged in polishing up the bosom of a linen gair that was spread out on a narrow counter behind the dingy curtain.

"Chin-Chin," responded the Chinaman, as he looked up to take in the features of his visitors, "What can do for Melican man tlo-day?"

THE PASS-WORD.

My guide stepped up to the son of the Flowery Kingdom and laying his hand lightly on his shoulder, whispered some most infernal teabox gibberish in his ear. Our laundryman appeared to catch on satisfactorily, for he immediately said:

"Allee litte; clome this side," showing us the way into the interior heathen sanctum hung with more red curtains and where the light was dim and the small more than aromatic. "Me go catchee Ab-Kee. Back bly and bly. Slit down!" motioning us to a rickety rattan sofa, which from its age might have been used in the Confucius homestead, and then leaving us for a remoter part of the house, passing out through more red curtains, which contrasted patriotically with the immaculate white of his pajama and the blue nankeen of his trousers.

of his trousers.

In a little while Ab-Kee, who appeared to be a sort of mandarin in the place and who was a rather large framed Chinaman, with keen oblique black eyes, cue tied up on top of his head and dressed in semi-European costume, returned. A short confab took place between him and the guide, and turning, he said: "Allee lite, you flend wantee see Chinaman glamble, play fan-tan. Alife lite, clome along," with which he led the way through the red curtains, along back by a narrow hell-way, up a flight of stairs to a door leading to a rear room of the den. At this he stopped. "Me lap," giving a mystic wink of his eye and an esotoric crack or two with his long bony fingers on the panels. "Ab-Foo, veily much flade, Mellican diestective. No wanchee get pulled."

In a few seconds the door was quietly un-bolted on inside and with Messra Ah-Kee and Ah-Foo and the guide, who had such intimate acquaintance with them, the re-porter was carried through another room, garnished with more red curtain and an-other door where a guest wight mat his garnished with more red curtain and another door where a queer sight met his gaze. Gathered about a large round table in center of room were some ten or twelve Chinamen, all so apparently intent on what was going on there that they scarce noticed or looked up at the intruders. The room was almost dark, the light was so dim. On the mantel over a disused fireplace was a blue Canton jar, in which were burning some tapers. Most of the Chinamen had little long bamboo pipes, the small bowls of which were ince-santly filled. On some conches or bunks in a far corner of the room were huddled two or three sleepers, who either from opium or fatigue at the game, for both, had succumbed. In the center of the table was a huge pile of braes "cash"—the Chinese penny, with square holes in it.

One man, who was introduced as Hong Lee, acted as banker, and in a drawer by him was quite a comfortable pile of United States coin and a role of notes. The game seemed to require such Colestial round the table in the play to rake out of the large central pile a smaller pile. Then they all began to assort their lesser piles, together with the banker, into small groups of four with the banker, into small groups of four ach. This counting off of fours was done with marvelous dexterity. As the last was reached the payment of the debt depended on how many of the cash were left in the banker's group, 1, 2, 3 or four, and the coincidence of the individual better's group with it.

This is the great Chinese gambling game fan-tan. Everybody in China plays it, from Prince Kung down to the coolies," said the guide. "It is a very simple game, but the combinations of betting are very great. They do not all'bet that the last vermaining count of the cash in their groups by fours will coincide with the tanker's, but that there will be 1, 2 or 3 cash left in his group or four, which makes it come out even, and on this they can wager, and, indeed, many other ways. At Macao, the Portuguese concession across the bay from Hong Kong, is a fan-tan house, where as heavy gambling is done as any place in the world. There is a large one at Canton, another at Shanghai and one at Foo-chu-fu. Every little place in China has its fantan hell like this. They gamble, smoke opium and tobacco in these places and often stay days at a sitting. It's a comparatively square game, being so simple it would be hard to practice a skin game on a Chinaman. A European, however, could be skinned by a Chinaman every day in the week at it, for, as you see, they play and sort the cash with wonderful rapidity. No European is as dexterous digitally or has such a sense of touch as a Chinaman. The latter can tell by feel and balancing on his fingers the slightest difference of weight in a silver cola. Chinese "shroffs," as they are called, are used in the California banks and the banks out in India and China to "shroff" the Mexican dollars—that is, examine and third chop dollars.

A CUP OF TEA.

After a few minutes examination of the THE GREAT CHINESE GAME. A CUP OF TEA.

A CUP OF TEA.

After a few minutes examination of the Oriental scheme of gambling and listening to the unintelligible guttural conversation and exclamations with which it was attended, Mr. Ah Kee had brought to us two tiny cups of toa in what seemed little toy porcelain teacups, saying:

"This velly fline tea; me catchee blox Woo-Sung thos year ago." Drinking or rather suppling—as one sip finished the contents of the cup—the prime importation, the guide signified our intention to return once more to daylight.

"Alice lite! Clome this way," and we were re-led down the stairway and hall out through the maze of red curtains and queer partitions to the room adjoining the street, where the same patient Mongolian whom we saw on coming was at work on another shirt.

"Velly glad see you. Clome again," said

"Velly glad see you. Clome again," said Mr. Ah-Kee to the polite guide as we surned to go out into the street,

Prof. Swing: Optimism is the perpetual youth of the world. It is the sun shining after the storm; a smile shining through the rain of weeping; it is music heard in the

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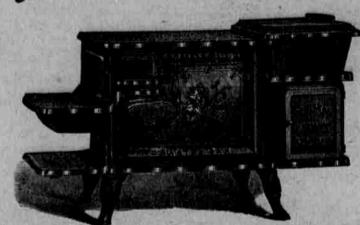
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